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UNCLAS COLOMBO 001539

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [CE](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: VIOLENCE IN SRI LANKA'S EAST: SUNSET FOR THE CEASE FIRE?

REF: A. COLOMBO 1537

[B.](#) COLOMBO 1417

¶1. (SBU) Immediately following Foreign Minister Kadirkamar's assassination (Reftel B), there were few reports of Cease-Fire Agreement (CFA) violations. However, in recent days, there have been a number of such violations in the East. The non-governmental Foundation for Co-Existence (FCE) has reported the following incidents:

-- On August 30, 1 LTTE cadre died and 1 LTTE cadre and 1 civilian were injured in an attack by unidentified gunmen.

-- On August 31 in Batticaloa, a hand grenade exploded on a major road, and immediately afterward, police opened fire.

-- Also on August 31 in another part of Batticaloa, in a second such incident, anti-LTTE Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) and GSL security forces fired rounds towards a place where a grenade had exploded on a major road. No casualties or property damages were reported. (Note: Under the terms of the CFA, the paramilitary EPDP was supposed to have disarmed. This incident, as well as reports from Embassy sources, indicate that the EPDP continues to harbor weapons. End note.)

¶2. (SBU) In addition, the Sri Lankan Army's (SLA's) website featured reports of the following incidents:

-- On August 30 in Batticaloa, five LTTE cadres arrived in two three-wheelers to assault a former LTTE cadre who was trying to leave the area with over \$5000 in Sri Lankan Rupees. SLA soldiers witnessed the assault and arrested the attacking cadres, the victim, and the three-wheeler drivers.

-- Also on August 30 in Batticaloa, two LTTE cadres on motorbikes lobbed a grenade at army troops, but the grenade failed to explode.

-- On August 31, two hand grenade attacks against SLA troops in the Eastern province of Valaichenai resulted in injuries to four soldiers and a police officer. The second of those attacks occurred outside a hospital, where SLA soldiers had gone to visit their colleagues injured in the first attack.

-- Also on August 31 in the same region, the LTTE attacked a police car with grenades and guns, and a police officer was injured and his vehicle damaged.

-- On August 31, two soldiers in the East were injured when LTTE cadres attacked them with small arms, petrol bombs, and hand grenades.

The website also noted that the SLA has reported all of these incidents to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: Embassy contacts in Batticaloa tell us that in typical fashion, each side (SLA, LTTE, EPDP, anti-LTTE Karuna Group) is laying blame for the incidents at someone else's doorstep. Investigations have not been fruitful, and as ever in Batticaloa, the truth remains murky.

The brief lull in hostilities immediately following Foreign Minister Kadirkamar's August 12 assassination appears to have ended. Both the LTTE and its coterie of rivals (which some allege enjoy SLA backing) are back to business as usual. Most disturbing is the fact that the LTTE's attacks occurred in the context of its refusal to meet the GSL's request to discuss strengthening the CFA (Reftel A). End comment.

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